

# Calgary Gala

## Impact Report



The 2022 Water for Life Gala in Calgary raised **over \$1,200,000.**

Every day, millions of women and school-age children - almost always girls - spend hours walking long distances to fetch water, which may be of poor quality, limited quantity or unaffordable.

Despite our understanding of the benefits of safe drinking water and the progress we have made, an estimated two billion people, [one quarter of the world's population](#), still go without. Unsafe drinking water is a driving factor behind the more than [1.5 million people](#) who die every year from diarrhoea, most of them infants and small children. Furthermore, the destructive impacts of climate change and emergencies are an increasing threat to water and sanitation systems, and are contributing to disparities in access.

From a small handful of pilot projects in rural communities in 1953 to working in 130 countries today, UNICEF has been committed to providing safe water, sanitation and hygiene to children worldwide for 70 years.



## Ethiopia: The Village of Serkema Recieves a Solar Powered Water System

Halima Omer, who resides in Serkema village situated in the Kombolcha District of the Oromia Region, had a terrible experience while fetching water.

*"I remember that day when I left home before sunrise. I was heading to the river, and suddenly, a hyena appeared on my way..."*

As Halima made her way to the river with her donkey, carrying her infant child on her back, little did she know that what would happen next would become a source of lifelong regret and pain.

*"I run back to save myself and my child, leaving the donkey to the hyena. But my child fell off my back."*

Halima's child sustained a serious injury and unfortunately passed away. Even at the age of 72, Halima still vividly remembers the heartbreaking event.

For the community in the small village of Serkema, water is precious. The village is surrounded by dry rugged mountainous terrain and is prone to recurrent drought. Women and girls spend hours looking for water from a faraway river and ponds.

Seven years ago, the community of Serkema received good news: the government had drilled a borehole at the lower mountain base and constructed a 25,000-liter water reservoir higher up on the hills. A fuel-run generator was installed to pump water to the reservoir, and WASH committees were tasked with managing the system.

Serkema seemed to get relief, but not for long.

The WASH committees encountered significant difficulties in obtaining fuel, which was located 60 km away and primarily transported by donkeys.



© UNICEF/UN0643395/Tesfaye

UNICEF supported solar-powered water scheme brings relief to the community in Serkema village, Oromia region, Ethiopia



In addition, the generator malfunctioned frequently, leading to maintenance becoming a major concern. Over the last five years, with each challenge compounding upon the last, the water system has become completely non-functional. Women and girls again began to go to the river like in the old days.

For 16-year-old Urji Abdusemed, fetching water means missing out on her education. “I used to leave home early to the river. It took hours to get there and by the time I came back, it will already be late for class. If I need to fetch water, that means, I have to miss at least two periods each day. That had affected my education,” she says. But now, all that is changed.

Working alongside partners, UNICEF installed a solar power system that pumps the much-needed water uphill using water pipelines that resist pressure. Additional water points were built near homes.

In Serkema, where the sun is abundant, the solar system is a sound investment. This climate-friendly water supply system **serves more than 6,500 people in the village**. Safe water is also available in Serkema Primary School **benefiting nearly 1,000 students**. During break time, the water taps are quite crowded as many kids assemble to drink and wash their hands.

The water also brings dignity to adolescent girls. Hygienic mensural practices in schools start with the availability of clean water as insufficient access to clean water in schools and lack of handwashing facilities are some of the challenges girls face when they are on their periods.

Halima has volunteered to be a member of the village WASH committee and is amazed to know that the sun can help pump water from deep in the ground.

Though Halima never attended school, she knows the value of education for girls. “Now we have water here, there is no excuse for mothers to keep girls at home,” she says firmly.



© UNICEF/JUN0643419/Testaye

Urji Abdusemed, 16, is happy that clean water is available in her school and near her home. She now finds time to study her lessons. Her dreams is to become a doctor and serve her community.

# Thank you for your support!

Unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is still responsible for the deaths of around 400,000 children under the age of 5 each year, or 1,000 every day.

Ensuring that every child has access to safe, sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene may seem like a daunting challenge, but it is indeed achievable. By working together, we can support children to reach their full potential and transform their communities.

**Thank you Calgary!** During the 2022 Water for Life Gala, [532 water pumps](#). Each water pump can provide safe water to a community of 150 people for up to 10 years.

Thanks to your support, [79,800 people](#) can have access to safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene for up to a decade. Through maintenance training for community members, water pumps will remain functional to continue to serve those who need them the most.

For over 30 years, the Water for Life Gala in Calgary has supported the greatest needs of children around the world. **Thank you for your tremendous support.**



Komal, age 11, at the newly installed hand pump at her school in Rajasthan, India.



For more information please contact:

**Holly Davidson**  
Manager, National Events  
UNICEF Canada  
[hdavidson@unicef.ca](mailto:hdavidson@unicef.ca)  
**587-324-5084**